



River Race 2003 – Father Neptune contender?

## Dates for your diary

**Returning to sailing** If you haven't sailed for a few years, and would like some help returning to the water, contact Malcolm Lord (Tel 896885) or [vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:vicecommodore@pfyc.org.uk) to register interest for a returners session.

### **Saturday/Sunday 13/14 September – End of Season Regatta**

After the success of the Midsummer Regatta, it is not planned to change much for the End of Season Regatta. We aim to have 3 races each day, which will give more racing even if one day is blown off. Briefing 1130 on Saturday 13 September, first race 1300. Fast and slow handicap. Entry £15 for singlehanders, £20 for double or multihanders – fees include evening meal on Saturday at 1900 in the clubhouse, and lunch on Sunday after racing. Anyone who can assist in the catering by providing cakes, savouries, serving or washing up – please contact Fiona (895665) or Nicola (895906). **If you wish alcoholic drink with the meal on Saturday night – please bring your own.** We already have £100 sponsorship from UKAEA.

**Friday 3 October – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Dance** – To celebrate as close as we can to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club's formation (9 October 1953). Dance to Half Canned. 7.30 for 8pm in the Royal British Legion, Thurso. Tickets will be £17 for adults and £15 for under 14s. A committee member will contact you about tickets, or if you prefer you can contact Jim Kelly (01847 895698). To avoid uncertainty in the number to be catered for, no tickets will be either allocated or refunded after the deadline of 26 September, and we respectfully request that all payments are received by this date.

### **\*\*\*New\*\*\* Saturday 1 November – Quiz night**

Teams of any size up to 6 may be entered. A meal will be provided. If you wish alcoholic drink, please bring your own. Further details in next newsletter. Would team captains please enter their teams by 7 October to allow the quiz to be organised. Please contact Mark Raffle (01847 894132) or [commodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:commodore@pfyc.org.uk) to enter your team.

### **\*\*New\*\* Tuesday 25 November – Annual General Meeting**

In the Thurso Club, starting at 1930. Details and formal notice to follow. A number of committee posts will require to be filled. In particular we will need a Secretary and a Training Secretary. Please consider whether you would be prepared to assist by serving on the committee - if you like what we've been doing this year, come and help us do more; if you don't like what we've been doing, bring your ideas to help us do it better next year. If you would be interested in joining the committee, or would like more information, please contact Mark Raffle (01847 894132) or [commodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:commodore@pfyc.org.uk).

### **\*\*\*New\*\*\* Saturday 29 November - Curling at Brora**

After an enjoyable trip earlier in the year (see March 2003 newsletter), we plan to repeat this over the winter – twice! Curling will be 1430 – 1630, followed by a meal afterwards. Cost of curling was £6.50 per person last time, and the meal of your choice can be booked to be ready for when you come off

the ice. Discount on normal room rate available for anyone wishing to stay at the hotel on the Saturday night after participating in curling. Anyone interested in curling, please contact Mark Raffle (01847 894132) or [commodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:commodore@pfyc.org.uk). Please also advise if you are prepared to drive down and have free space in your car.

### **\*\*\*New\*\*\* Saturday 20 March 2004 – Curling at Brora**

As above – the second trip over the winter.

## Thank you

After the Midsummer Regatta Geoff Cullington, a former Commodore, and now an Honorary Member, made a donation to the Club. We are most grateful for this. A previous donation from Geoff allowed the fitting-out of the kitchen in the current clubhouse, and is remembered by a plaque at the entrance to the kitchen.

## Safety and independence

It is strongly recommended that all sailors carry a personal knife while afloat, either sailing or on a rescue boat. This will allow you to cut yourself, a crewmate, your boat, or another boat free of any entangling ropes, or assist in making repairs. It is recommended that all sailors also carry a length of cord long enough and strong enough to allow temporary repairs to be made to rigging or other parts of the boat. This will avoid unnecessary diversion of the rescue boat to tow you home, when you could fix something yourself.

## Guard boat drivers/OOD

Please remember to check that the vent on the petrol tank is open. If it's not open the engine will stop, and won't go again until you do remember! Not only embarrassing, but potentially dangerous if someone needs rescuing.

## Contacts

**E-mail addresses** – To receive rapid communications, please send yours to [commodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:commodore@pfyc.org.uk)

**Newsletter contributions** – Send to Mark Raffle by the means of your choice, but preferably by e-mail to [commodore@pfyc.org.uk](mailto:commodore@pfyc.org.uk).

## Shetland report



Glen and Iain on the beat

The Pentland Firth Fireball (PFF) team took runner-up in both the Classic and Junior classes in the recent European Fireball Championships held in Shetland after 6 days of racing. The programme followed a marathon 10 races over 6 days in weather ranging from near gale and rough seas to barely perceptible breeze on a mill pond land-scape. Unsure of the competition in the Junior and Classic classes, hopes soared early in the event as Barbara and Guy Newson, the only senior

PFF boat, finished race 2 first in the Classic. Both PFF young sailor's boats, David Scott / Matthew Phimister and Glen Foster / Iain Thomson, took top junior placings and 35<sup>th</sup> / 37<sup>th</sup> out of 48 in the Open fleet on Race 4. Revelling in typical Shetland heavy conditions, held 1.5 miles out into the North Sea, the warmth and sunshine was idyllic in waters that were closer to the Arctic Circle than London.

The team had prepared themselves and their Classic wooden boats well for the conditions which saw many newer boats overwhelmed. But it wasn't all plain sailing. Barbara and Guy had a serious collision at the start of the first race forcing their retirement; Glen and Iain blew a primary fitting for their spinnaker but finished with a jury rig. David and Matthew wondered if their repaired mast would survive as it had been badly bent only 2 weeks before.

Sailing for up to 1½ hours to get to the start line, some days the fleet ran 3 races and did not return to shore for 6 ½ hours. The Championship course would not fit into Thurso Bay.

Encouraged by their early results, the team were stunned as the wind dramatically disappeared in race 5, another weather surprise for Shetland. Weighing over 140lbs more than their competing group and without the power to plane, the PFF junior boats had to plough a deeper furrow through the water. As the wind went from light to barely perceptible, frustration hit the whole fleet. For ½ an hour Glen and Iain hung in there and crept half way up the fleet only to have their efforts dashed by a signal from the Committee Boat – Race 5 Abandoned.

On Wednesday the wind returned and saw the PFF juniors careering along at 25 knots in 12 knots of breeze. Ironically this was the Rest Day and the fun was being had in land yachts in a school playing field. The Shetland hosts had put on a magnificent social programme, with welcoming banners and posters all over town.

The PFF team were grateful for the generous support to the cost of travel by North Link on their superbly appointed Ferries. Local supporters are also warmly thanked. They are the Caithness Sports Council for a grant towards accommodation and help with the junior entry fees by the North Coast Branch of the Coast Guard Association.

Returning to the fray on Thursday the wind failed to deliver. David and Matthew, with the heaviest boat in the fleet, were timed out of their first race and couldn't make the start of the second. Ripping their number one spinnaker in the third race led to retirement and a long drift back to Lerwick without a single result to show for their efforts.

The team's ranking banked in the earlier strong winds had now taken a caning, slipping down the ladder by up to 7 places. With the forecast for Friday promising nothing better, the PFF junior boats spent Thursday evening exploring every means of squeezing out an extra ¼ knot from their craft before putting them to bed.

Friday dawned to a mere 4 knots of breeze and significant swell from the Southeast, better than a drift but not enough to overcome the weight handicap. For everyone this was the last opportunity to make the difference. Disaster struck at the front of the fleet as the favourites, who happened to have raced Glen and Iain's boat 20 years ago, watched their light wind spinnaker rip in half on the last race and with it went the Championship. The battle was just as intense at the back of the fleet, with 4 or 5 places being won or lost in a single leg. The PFF juniors improved their scores over the course of the day with Glen and Iain 39<sup>th</sup> and David and Matthew 40<sup>th</sup> on the last race.

Glen and Iain, who led the junior fleet until the final day, majored in spinnaker handling while David and Matthew consistently launched off the start-line in strong positions and

improved their light wind performance throughout the week. Barbara and Guy pulled back from that scary start-line collision to file a consistent score card and take the only prize for Scotland – 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Classic.



Barbara and Guy collect their prize

### Results

Fireball Open	Final result / 48	Best Race Result / 48
Newson / Newson	42	36
Foster / Thomson	44	37
Scott / Phimister	45	35

  

Fireball Classic	Final result / 8	Best Race Result / 8
Newson / Newson	2	1
Foster / Thomson	4	2
Scott / Phimister	5	3

  

Fireball Junior	Final result / 3	Best Race Result / 3
Foster / Thomson	2	1
Scott / Phimister	3	1

*Thanks to Steve Foster for this report, which also appeared in the John O'Groat Journal on 15 August.*

## Coastguard raft race

The Coastguard held its annual raft race on the afternoon of Saturday 23 August. This is normally from Thurso to Scrabster beaches. However, conditions in the morning of the race indicated that this would be a very hard paddle into the wind. The Club guard boat laid a course to allow the race to start and finish from Scrabster beach, and provided safety cover during the race. With the Sea Cadets, Sea Scouts, Diving Club and the lifeboat also providing safety cover there was almost one safety boat for each raft. The Club facilities were used for briefing safety crews and competitors, and made available to competitors at the end of the race for hot showers. The Coastguard ran stalls outside the Club and a jazz band played, while inside hot drinks were provided free to competitors. Drinks were also provided to non-competitors for a donation, and in this way we raised a little over £20 for the North Coast branch of the Coastguard Association. The money raised by the Coastguard goes to charity and community donations – we are pleased to be able to assist by making our facilities available.

## Juniors win Intercounty

Six juniors traveled to Orkney on Friday 29 August to defend the intercounty trophy which PFYC won at Scrabster last year. Racing took place on Saturday in a very choppy Kirkwall Bay, in winds of force 4 - 5. About 20 boats – Toppers and Picos - set sail for the initial fun race in the morning, some with full sail and others with up to 3 reefs. Typically, the wind eased once they got out into the bay, and after finishing the fun race the boats came ashore to shake out reefs before the first real race. The first attempt at the first race had to be abandoned after the wind increased again, causing many capsizes and several breakages. Eventually, 3 races were held with 6 boats competing from each club. For equal competition, all were compelled to sail with 2 reefs, putting novices from both clubs on the same footing as our juniors who normally sail Fireballs. Congratulations to our team – Kai Baird, Jimmy Beresford, Glen Foster, Laura Phimister, David Scott and Alan Thomson – which performed very well, particularly in the final race where they took the top 5 places, and won the trophy convincingly. Alan Thomson had the best individual results. The team was accompanied by Alison Phimister, Steve Foster and Mark Raffle. Once again, Northlink Ferries gave discounted travel.